THE LION’S MOUTH OPENS, THE STORY OF ONE COURAGEOUS WOMAN’S JOURNEY TO DISCOVER IF SHE HAS INHERITED HUNTINGTON’S DISEASE, DEBUTS JUNE 1, EXCLUSIVELY ON HBO

Two-Time Oscar® Nominee Lucy Walker Directs

Huntington’s disease is an incurable hereditary degenerative brain disorder that results in the progressive loss of mental faculties and physical control.

In the acclaimed documentary THE LION’S MOUTH OPENS, two-time Academy Award® nominee Lucy Walker (HBO’s Emmy®-winning “The Crash Reel”) follows courageous young filmmaker and actress Marianna Palka as she gathers her friends to find out if she has inherited Huntington’s from her father. The intimate film debuts MONDAY, JUNE 1 (9:00-9:30 p.m. ET/PT), exclusively on HBO, as Huntington’s Disease Awareness Month comes to a close.

Other HBO playdates: June 1 (5:10 a.m.), 4 (11:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m.), 6 (11:30 a.m.), 8 (2:30 p.m.) and 14 (3:45 p.m.)

HBO2 playdates: June 2 (11:30 p.m.), 10 (8:30 p.m.), 12 (2:00 p.m.) and 20 (10:00 a.m.)

Featuring interviews with Palka, her mother and her friends, including actors Jason Ritter and Bryce Dallas Howard, as well as home movies from her childhood, haunting videos of people suffering from the illness, and footage of the moments before, during,

Contact:  New York: Lana Iny or Jessica Driscoll (212) 512-1462 or 1322
Los Angeles: Nancy Lesser (310) 382-3274

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and after she gets the news, THE LION’S MOUTH OPENS chronicles one woman’s decision to face her demons and receive this potentially life-altering information.

Around 30,000 Americans have been diagnosed with Huntington’s disease, and approximately 200,000 more, whose parents were diagnosed with the disorder, have a 50% chance of developing it. Less than 10% of those at risk choose to take the test that reveals if they have inherited Huntington’s. Today, there is no cure.

Only eight years old when her father began showing signs of the disease, Palka watched him deteriorate over the years as, in her mother’s words, “each brick from the castle was just falling out.” Discovering that the gene mutation could be traced back to Palka’s paternal grandmother, she has a 50% chance of being affected.

Palka decides to take the test at age 32. The night before her doctor’s appointment to get the results, she gathers her closest friends together for a dinner party. Preparing for this monumental moment, she reflects on what led her to this point and what the future holds. Her friend (and former boyfriend) Jason Ritter asks if she is afraid of the results, but reassures her, adding, “I don’t think you would ever let something as simple as fear stop you from doing anything.”

The next day, Bryce Dallas Howard and Moet Hashimoto accompany her to the doctor. In the waiting room, they discuss the vastly different realities that could come from the test. As Palka notes, “It’s this road or that road, there’s no middle.”

THE LION’S MOUTH OPENS was nominated for a Short Film Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and received a Special Jury Award at Aspen ShortsFest and an award for Outstanding Achievement in Nonfiction Short Filmmaking at Cinema Eye Honors Awards, US.

Lucy Walker previously directed the Oscar® nominees “Waste Land” and HBO’s “The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom” (also nominated for a News & Documentary Emmy®), as well as HBO’s “The Crash Reel,” which won a News & Documentary Emmy® in the category of Outstanding Informational Programming – Long Form. Her other credits
include the feature documentaries “Countdown to Zero” and “Blindsight,” and the HBO presentation “Devil's Playground,” which was nominated for four News & Documentary Emmys®.

THE LION’S MOUTH OPENS was directed and produced by Lucy Walker; producers, Marianna Palka and Julian Cautherley; shot and co-produced by Nick Higgins; co-producer, Sabrina Doyle; editor, Joe Peeler.

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